

Preface

In the summer of 2002 we submitted the preliminary research proposal of this project to the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature. Since its acceptance, more than 100 scientists from three countries have undertaken an ambitious research program investigating the links between continental and open water ecosystems. After our combined efforts over 7 years, we are now confident that primary production in the Sea of Okhotsk and the Oyashio region is dependent on the iron supplied from the Amur River basin. We are proud to say that this might be the first example demonstrating the linkage between a continental scale terrestrial environment and an open water ecosystem.

The project, however, did not always proceed favorably. The Amur River basin and the Sea of Okhotsk has been a political hotspot. Bilateral and multinational joint scientific activities faced various kind of difficulty. The project members made significant efforts to address these problems as they arose, and little by little were able to consolidate our international collaboration. Finally, the Amur Okhotsk Project succeeded in establishing an epistemic community, the Amur-Okhotsk Consortium, to discuss sustainable use of the Amur-Okhotsk ecosystem.

This is the sixth and final report of the Amur Okhotsk Project. The first part of the report summarizes the project. Following this summary, the 10 group leaders describe their group outcomes in detail. The latter part of the report compiles individual scientific findings conducted within the framework of the Amur Okhotsk Project. I hope the readers can capture the accomplishments of this multinational, cross-disciplinary research project.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the project members for their tireless efforts in achieving the tasks of the project. I would also acknowledge the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature and its staff for supporting the Amur Okhotsk Project for 7 years. I would like to dedicate this report to the first Director of RIHN, late Prof. Toshitaka Hidaka, who unfortunately passed away on November 14, 2009. He proposed RIHN's foundational principle of “futurability”, which invited us to think positively of the future potential in human-environmental interactions, and motivated me to design this project.

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